

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-9 (canceled).

1 Claim 10 (new): A hierarchically-structured personal agent
2 system within a computer system, the personal agent system
3 comprising:

4 a personal assistant sub-system having a plurality of
5 personal assistants, each one of said personal assistants
6 being arranged to perform a task for only one different user
7 in a plurality of users;

8 a service agent sub-system comprising a plurality of
9 personal service agents, each one of the personal service
10 agents being arranged for carrying out a specific sub-task
11 for an associated one of the personal assistants and for
12 only an associated one of the users who is served by the
13 associated one personal assistant; and

14 a separate coordinating sub-system, apart from the
15 personal assistant sub-system and the service agent
16 sub-system, comprising a coordination processor for
17 coordinating actions of ones of the personal service agents
18 for different ones of the users; and

19 wherein, to accomplish the task, said associated one
20 user only communicates with the associated one personal
21 assistant, said associated one personal assistant
22 communicates with the associated one user and each of at
23 least one of the personal service agents which serve the
24 associated one personal assistant, and said each of the at

25 least one of the personal service agents communicates with
26 the associated one personal assistant and the coordinating
27 sub-system, and the coordinating sub-system communicates
28 with as many of the personal service agents in the agent
29 system as are then necessary to accomplish the task, thereby
30 collectively defining a communication hierarchy; and

31 the system further comprising:

32 a central control unit, having addresses of all of
33 the personal assistants, the personal service agents and the
34 coordination processor in the agent system, for restricting
35 communication among the associated one personal assistant,
36 each of the at least one of the personal service agents and
37 the coordination processor to occur according to the
38 hierarchy such that, while the task is being performed by
39 the agent system for the associated one user, confidential
40 information of the associated one user is not provided,
41 without permission of the associated one user, by said one
42 associated personal assistant to any other one of the
43 personal assistants in the agent system and associated with
44 any other one of the users.

1 Claim 11 (new): The personal agent system according to
2 claim 10 wherein the central control unit is arranged for
3 connecting each one of the users to a different associated
4 one of the personal assistants.

1 Claim 12 (new): The personal agent system according to
2 claim 10 wherein the associated one personal assistant
3 comprises means for adjusting the associated one personal
4 assistant to behavior of the associated one user.

1 Claim 13 (new): The personal agent system according to
2 claim 10 wherein at least a given one of all the personal

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3 service agents which collectively serve the associated one
4 personal assistant comprises means for adjusting the given
5 one personal service agent to behavior of the associated one
6 user.